

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Cancelled).
2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining an Internet domain currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining Internet domains currently accessed by the other users.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining a newsgroup currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining newsgroups currently accessed by the other users.
4. (Cancelled).
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining a URL currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining URLs currently accessed by the other users.
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining an online context on which the user presently is focused, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining online contexts on which the other users presently are focused.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein identifying the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user comprises identifying other users who enter the online context of the user and users who leave the online context of the user.
8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an age of the user or of an other user.
9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to a demographic identifier of the user or of an other user.
10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an expertise rating of the user or of an other user.
11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an interest of the user or of an other user.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to a participation status of the user or of an other user.
13. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the information related to the participation status comprises a visibility preference of the user or of the other user.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the information related to the participation status comprises information defining the participation status of the user or of the other user based on multiple online contexts.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information for the user comprises trait information of an individual selected as an associate by the user.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an online status of the user or of an other user.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the online status comprises a status of active, idle, away, and/or mobile.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising:
storing other information related to the online context of the user; and
storing other information related to the online context of the other users,
wherein causing presentation, to the user, of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of other users comprises causing presentation, to the user, of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of other users based on the stored other information.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the other information comprises information indicative of an identification of the user or of the other users.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the information indicative of an identification comprises an online identifier associated with the user or with the other users.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the other information comprises contact information of the user or of the other users.

22-37. (Cancelled).

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users comprises enabling the user to send an instant message to the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users comprises enabling the user to send an email to the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users comprises enabling the user to contact directly the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users using a voice communication.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the voice communication employs a mobile device.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users comprises enabling the user to store contact information of the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users to a contact list of the user.

44. (Original) The method of claim 43 wherein the contact list of the user comprises a buddy list.

45-59. (Cancelled).

60. (Currently Amended) A method of informing a user of other network users, the method comprising:

executing instructions on one or more processing devices such that the one or more processing devices perform the following:

determining an online context of a user, the online context being one or more of a web site currently accessed by the user, an Internet domain currently accessed by the user, a newsgroup currently accessed by the user, or a URL currently accessed by the user;

determining an online context of other users;

storing trait information for the user;

~~storing trait information for the other users;~~

comparing the online context of the user to the online context of the other users

~~and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users;~~

storing trait information for the other users when the other users enter the online context of the user and removing the stored trait information for the other users when the other users leave the online context of the user;

comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users;

based on the comparison, identifying a group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and

causing presentation, to the user, of an indicator before the user is in communication with any member of the identified group, that identifies the indicator identifying at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8 wherein comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users comprises comparing information related to an age of the user to information related to an age of the other users.

62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users comprises comparing a demographic identifier of the user to a demographic identifier of the other users.

63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising causing presentation, to the user, of the number of users in the group of the other users.

64. (Cancelled).

65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising causing presentation, to the user, of the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users.

66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65 wherein the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users comprises an interest of the at least one user in the group of the other users.

67. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65 wherein the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users comprises an interest of an individual selected as an associate by the at least one user in the group of the other users.

68. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65 wherein the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users comprises an expertise of the at least one user in the group of the other users.

69. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65 wherein causing presentation of the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users comprises causing presentation of the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users graphically.

70. (Cancelled).

71. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein causing presentation of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users comprises causing presentation of an indicator that identifies at least one user as a member of the group of the other users, wherein the users in the group of the other users are sorted according to trait information.

72. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information indicative of a location.

73. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 72 wherein comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users comprises comparing information indicative of a location related to the user to information indicative of a location related to the other users.

74. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising repeating the act of determining the online context of the user, the act of determining the online context of the other users, the act of storing trait information for the user, the act of storing trait information for the other users, the act of comparing the online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users, the act of identifying the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user, and the act of causing presentation of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users at a user designated interval.

75. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising repeating the act of determining the online context of the user, the act of determining the online context of the other users, the act of storing trait information for the user, the act of storing trait information for the other users, the act of comparing the online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users, the act of identifying the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user, and the act of causing presentation of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users at a system designated interval.

76. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising:
determining a changed online context of the user;
comparing the changed online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for each of the other users in the group of the other users;
based on the comparison, identifying a group of the other users sharing the changed online context of the user and at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and
causing presentation, to the user, of an indicator that identifies at least one user as a member of the group of the other users.

77. (Currently Amended) A system for informing a user of other network users, the system comprising a processor connected to a storage device and one or

more input/output devices, wherein the processor is configured to:

determine an online context of a user, the online context being a web site currently accessed, an Internet domain currently accessed, a newsgroup currently accessed, or a URL currently accessed;

determine an online context of other users;

store trait information for the user in a users store of the storage device;

~~store trait information for the other users in the users store of the storage device;~~

compare the online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users;

store trait information for the other users in the storage device when the other users enter the online context of the user and remove the stored trait information for the other users from the storage device when the other users leave the online context of the user;

compare the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users;

identify, based on the comparison, a group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and

cause presentation, to the user, of an indicator before the user is in communication with any member of the identified group, that identifies the indicator identifying at least one user as a member of the group of the other users.

78. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 77, wherein the users store is migrated based on an activity level associated with the online context of the user.

79. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 77, wherein the users store is divided based on an activity level associated with the online context of the user.

80. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 77, wherein the users store is combined with a related users store based on an activity level associated with the online context of the user.

81. (Currently Amended) A hardware device storing a computer program configured to inform a user of other network users, the computer program comprising one or more code segments that, when executed, cause a computer to:

determine an online context of a user, the online context being a web site currently accessed, an Internet domain currently accessed, a newsgroup currently accessed, or a URL currently accessed;

determine an online context of other users;

store trait information for the user;

~~store trait information for the other users;~~

compare the online context of the user to the online context of the other users
~~and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other~~
~~users;~~

store trait information for the other users when the other users enter the online
context of the user and removing the stored trait information for the other users when
the other users leave the online context of the user;

comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users;

based on the comparison, identify a group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and

cause presentation, to the user, of an indicator before the user is in communication with any member of the identified group, that identifies the indicator identifying at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user.

82. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10 wherein comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users comprises comparing an expertise rating of the user to an expertise rating of the other users.

83. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising causing presentation, to the user, of an online identifier associated with the at least one user in the group of the other users.

84. (Cancelled).

85. (Cancelled).

86. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining a web site currently accessed by the

user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining web sites currently accessed by the other users.

87. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein causing presentation of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user comprises visually distinguishing the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user from other users who share the online context of the user but do not share the at least one trait with the user.

88. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein identifying the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and at least one trait with the user comprises:

identifying a first group of the other users sharing the online context of the user, the number of users in the first group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and

identifying a subgroup of the first group of the other users sharing at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the subgroup of the first group of the other users being less than the number users in the first group of the other users.

89-98. (Cancelled).

99. (Currently Amended) A method of informing a user of other users, the method comprising:

executing instructions on one or more processing devices such that the one or

more processing devices perform the following:

determining an online context of a user, the online context being one or more of a web site currently accessed by the user, an Internet domain currently accessed by the user, a newsgroup currently accessed by the user, or a URL currently accessed by the user;

determining an online context of other users;

accessing a contact list for the user that identifies one or more of the other users as contacts of the user;

analyzing the online context of the user, the online context of the other users, and the accessed contact list for the user that identifies one or more of the other users as contacts of the user;

storing trait information for the contacts of the user when the contacts of the user enter the online context of the user and removing the stored trait information for the contacts of the user when the contacts of the user leave the online context of the user;

comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the contacts of the user;

based on the analysis, identifying a group of the other users sharing the online context, at least one trait with the user, and who are contacts of the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and

enabling presentation, to the user, of an indicator before the user is in communication with any member of the identified group, that identifies the indicator identifying at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the

online context with the user, at least one trait with the user, and who are contacts of the user.

100. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining an Internet domain currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining Internet domains currently accessed by the other users.

101. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining a newsgroup currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining newsgroups currently accessed by the other users.

102. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining a URL currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining URLs currently accessed by the other users.

103. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining an online context on which the user presently is focused, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining online contexts on which the other users presently are focused.

104. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99 wherein identifying the group of the other users sharing the online context and the relationship comprises

identifying other users who enter the online context of the user and users who leave the online context of the user.

105. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99 further comprising enabling the user to send an instant message to the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users.

106. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99 further comprising causing presentation, to the user, of the number of users in the group of the other users.

107. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99 wherein accessing information regarding the relationship between the user and one or more of the other users includes accessing a contact list, the contact list including identification information of users.

108. (Currently Amended) A system for informing a user of other users, the system comprising one or more processing devices connected to one or more storage devices storing instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more processing devices to:

determine an online context of a user, the online context being one or more of a web site currently accessed by the user, an Internet domain currently accessed by the user, a newsgroup currently accessed by the user, or a URL currently accessed by the user;

determine an online context of other users;

access information regarding a relationship between the user and one or more of the other users;

analyze the online context of the user, the online context of the other users, and the accessed information regarding the relationship between the user and the one or more of the other users;

store trait information for the contacts of the user when the other users enter the online context of the user and remove the stored trait information for the other users when the other users leave the online context of the user;

compare the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users;

based on the analysis, identify a group of the other users sharing the online context, at least one trait with the user, and the relationship, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and

enable presentation, to the user, of an indicator before the user is in communication with any member of the identified group, ~~that identifies~~ the indicator identifying at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the online context, at least one trait, and the relationship with the user.

109. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for sharing one or more matching online traits between a user and a buddy of the user in an instant messaging communications system comprising:

identifying, using a processor, one or more files requested by a first buddy user associated with a buddy list, the buddy list including the first buddy user and a second buddy user;

determining, using a processor, that the second buddy user has requested one or more of the one or more files requested by the first buddy user;

identifying, using a processor, one or more on-line traits associated with the first buddy user;

storing the one or more on-line traits associated with the first buddy user;

identifying, using a processor, one or more on-line traits associated with the second buddy user ;

storing the one or more on-line traits associated with the second buddy user
when the second buddy user requests one or more of the one or more files requested
by the first buddy user;

based on the determination that the second buddy user has requested one or more of the one or more files requested by the first buddy user, ~~determining whether~~
comparing the one or more on-line traits associated with the first buddy user ~~correspond~~
to with the one or more on-line traits associated with the second buddy user; and

sending an identification of the second buddy user to the first buddy user, before
the first buddy user is in communication with the second buddy user, when the second
buddy user has requested one or more of the one or more files requested by the first
buddy user, and when the one or more on-line traits associated with the first buddy user correspond to the one or more on-line traits associated with the second buddy user.

110. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 109, wherein the one or more files requested by the first buddy user are associated with one or more web pages.

111. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 109, wherein the one or more files requested by the first buddy user are associated with one or more URLs.

112. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 109, wherein the one or more files requested by the first buddy user are associated with one or more sites.

113. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 109, wherein the one or more files requested by the first buddy user are associated with one or more newsgroups.

114. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 109, wherein determining whether the one or more on-line traits associated with the first user correspond to the one or more on-line traits associated with the second buddy user includes determining that the first and second buddy users share a common interest.

115. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 109, wherein determining whether the one or more on-line traits associated with the first user correspond to the one or more on-line traits associated with the second buddy user includes determining that the first and second buddy users share a geographic location.